

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652:N/A

SUBJECT: VOA RUSSIAN PROGRAMMING

1. SINCE CESSATION OF JAMMING, VOA HAS BEEN CONSIDERING WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE RUSSIAN PROGRAM SCHEDULING. CURRENT SCHEDULE WAS ARRANGED WITH JAMMING IN MIND. FOR INSTANCE, "SUMMARY OF THE DAY" SHOW, NOW ON THE AIR 2400 - 0100 MOSCOW TIME, WAS DESIGNED TO REPEAT MAJOR POLITICAL STORIES LATE AT NIGHT WHEN RECEPTION WAS BETTER AND TRANSMITTERS COULD BE MASSES TO BREAK THROUGH JAMMING.

2. ANOTHER NEW ELEMENT IN TRANSMITTER CAPABILITY IN GREECE WHICH GIVES GREATER GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT. WE ASSUMED NOVOSIBIRSK WAS ON FRINGES BUT WE NOW FIND THESE PROGRAMS ARE HEARD AS FAR EAST AS IRKUTSK. BECAUSE OF TIME ZONES AND TRANSMITTER SCHEDULE, HOWEVER, POLITICAL SHOWS NOW CARRIED 0300 AND 0500 IRKUTSK TIME.

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3. NOW THAT MIDDLE EAST NEWS IS LESS URGENT, SPECIAL NEWS AND POLITICAL PROGRAM WHICH WAS ON AIR 1900 -2000 MOSCOW TIME ON WEEKDAYS HAS BEEN DROPPED. WE NOW PREPARED MAKE PERMANENT SCHEDULE CHANGS TO FIT POST-JAMMING CIRCUMSTANCES. PROPOSED CHANGES WE PLAN PUT INTO EFFECT NOVEMBER 18.

A. OUR 2400 TO 0100 "SUMMARY OF THE DAY" SHOW WILL BE DROPPED IN FAVOR OF "NIGHT OWL" PROGRAM SIMILAR THAT USED PRIOR TO RESTART OF JAMMING. PROGRAM WOULD BEGIN AND END WITH NEWSCAST AND INTERVENING TIME WOULD BE DEVOTED TO FREE-FLOWING BROADCAST WITH MUSIC, SOME FEATURES, AND ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT POLITICAL ITEMS.

B. MAIN POLITICAL SHOW, "EVENTS AND OPINIONS"WOULD REMAIN ON AIR FROM 2200 TO 2300 MOSCOW TIME.

C. WE WOULD SUBSTITUTE NEW POLITICAL SHOW AND FEATURES SHOW FOR 2000 -2100 MOSCOW TIME IN PLACE OF FEATURE MATERIAL NOW BROADCAST THEN. SHOW WOULD CONTAIN SOME FRESH POLITICAL PIECES PLUS POLITICAL REPEATS WHICH REMAIN CURRENT FROM PREVIOUS DAY. ESTIMATE NEWS AND POLITICAL ITEMS WOULD TAKE UP 40 - 50 MINUTES AND REMAINDER OF TIME BE DEVOTED TO "SERIOUS" FEATURES.

D. FINALLY, MORE POLITICAL MATERIAL FROM PREVIOUS DAY WOULD BE BROADCAST AT 1500 - 1700 MOSCOW TIME. THIS WOULD REACH EASTERN AND WESTERN SIBERIA IN EVENING. UNTIL VOA HAS STAFF TO ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL SHIFT, STALE MATERIAL WOULD BE USED FOR ALL BUT LIVE NEWS PORTIONS OF SHOW. RECOGNIZE DRAWBACKS INVOLVED BUT BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO REACH CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN AND WESTERN SIBERIA AT THIS TIME OF DAY WITH MORE POLITICAL MATERIAL.

E. ON SATURDAYS "DANCE"SHOW WOULD BE CARRIED IN PERIOD MIDNIGHT - 0100 RATHER THAN "NIGHT OWL."

4. IF MOSCOW OBJECTS TO ANY OF PLANNED SCHEDULE CHANGES OR HAS OTHER SUGGESTIONS, ADVISE PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 11.

DECONTROL NOVEMBER 2, 1974.
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